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Fostering Ethical Awareness in Youth: A Technological Game

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ARIANA WYNN (Psychology, Communication Studies)

Fostering Ethical Awareness in Youth: A Technological Game

Sponsor: Melissa French

This project started with me wanting to explore why educators have seen a decline in empathy and ethical awareness among today's youth. With technology being at the forefront of everyday life, much more so than in previous years, there has been some debate over how constant and continual use of technology early in life might affect a child. While most studies focused on violent games and their correlation to aggression, I wanted to see if technology could be used in a way that resulted in something positive. To that end, I designed the game "What Would You Do?" that poses hypothetical questions to children and asks them to choose from a set of responses based on what they would most likely do. Depending on what they choose as their answer, they will be awarded a specific number of spaces to progress on the board (either no spaces, 1 space or 2 spaces). The thinking is that the progression of movement across the board will help to guide youth into figuring out which actions are the most ethical. This game is designed to be used as an aid for teachers and therapists as a fun way to help develop these ethical skills in youth ages 6-12 who have demonstrated need. To showcase "What Would You Do?", I compiled a research proposal that details previous research, my findings, and the potential experimental design associated with testing the game. Additionally, I have created a technological version of the game; however, due to limitations in available programming, not all components could be included. Finally, I have also built a supplemental physical version of the game to provide a more complete look at the playability and functionality of the game.